



COMMON SENSE in the HOME

EDITED by MARION HARLAND



PAPER BAG COOKERY IN AMERICAN KITCHENS.

FULLY a year has elapsed since the marvelous innovation upon established culinary custom in the form of paper bag cookery was first exploited by the American and English press. It has been written up in countless periodicals, demonstrated by lectures in our principal cities, and put into experimental practice in hundreds of homes. We have surely had time and opportunity for testing the system in the private house, as in the lecture room and hotel.

In proof that our housekeeper has tested the system for herself, and fairly, I offer today a few of the letters dealing with the subject that have almost come to me. In reply to a severely puzzled member will you give some suggestions that would aid in conducting successfully the new paper bag cookery?

"Although following the directions for regulating the temperature of the oven and the time for cooking faithfully and to the letter, my experience is that the bag invariably turns black and the food cooked in it tastes of burnt paper."

"What is wrong?"

Appeal of Perplexed Housewife.

"You have told us a dozen times to call upon you in the time of culinary trouble, and I believe you are sincere in what you say. I have never known you to turn a deaf ear to the appeal of an inexperienced or perplexed housekeeper."

"To begin at the beginning of my trouble, I was in New York last winter, and attended a series of lectures upon paper bag cookery. We were told that if we would throw away our old pots and pans and kettles, and use paper bags instead, there would be no more washing of dishes, no bills for new utensils, no smell of cooking in the halls, no pot closest to clean and to keep in order, etc. According to the lecturer, our kitchens would look like libraries, with the shelves now taken up by tins and enamel ware and all that occupied by books and magazines. All of which we would have lots of time to read. No greasy pots and saucers stuck away in corners by the last cook, no rust and no clutter. We would sit down to a dinner in our best clothes, for there would be no dish-washing after we had finished eating. All we would have to do would be to gather up the used papers and ram them down in the box intended for the scavenger next day."

"O, it was a first class fairy tale! It sounded like the millennium!"

"Now for the plain truth! Like a fool, I packed all my pots, saucers, and kettles up to the garret, and laid in a few hundred of bag-assorted sizes and numbered like so many prime packages. I spent half a day going over them with my cook. She is a good girl. I ought to say 'she was,' as you will see presently. Until then she had been willing to learn anything new, and took real pleasure in trying recipes. She did a 'stew' at the paper bag question, although she looked mighty sober as I explained. So, I proposed to help her with the first dinner. We had soup, roast lamb, canned green peas,

and stewed tomatoes. Then for dessert, baked apple dumplings. Black coffee, of course."

Soup the First Problem.

"Well, the first proposition was the soup. I solved it partially by opening a can of the best brand of soup I knew of and pouring it into a bag of the right size. The bag was not a bag big enough to hold the lamb, so I trimmed it down to the right size and shape. Nellie looked sober at that, but I told her the remnants would work in well for a stew. The peas and canned tomatoes went in all right, and we fitted the dumplings into as many bags, eight in all."

"I'll cut the story as short as I can! The soup tasted of paper, but it didn't run out. The lamb stuck fast to the case, and when we got it out had an underpinning of paper. I found afterward that I ought to have used three tablespoons of butter to grease the inside of the bag and added water for the gravy. We never serve gravy with roast lamb, but always mint sauce, so I had not thought of the butter and extra water to keep the meat from burning."

"The peas tasted a bit 'close,' but they were tolerable, and so were the tomatoes. But I had to season the tomatoes after they were turned out. Every dumpling stuck to its case and we had to peel them before they were presentable. A friend who has had better luck with her paper bag cooking says I ought to have buttered the inside of the bags plentifully, allowing a teaspoonful to each. The recipe didn't say so."

Coffee Out and Out Failure.

"The coffee was an out and out failure and I had to acknowledge it. I made it in three separate bags, as there are three of us who drink it. I couldn't clear it, of course, and it wasn't drip coffee, either. It was just an undrinkable mess!"

"When dinner was over, I went into the kitchen and there sat Nellie crying her eyes red with mortification."

"Better luck next time!" said I. "Never give up after one trial!"

"I came downstairs early next morning to help her with breakfast. We agreed to have a ready-made cereal instead of trying to cook porridge."

"That's one thing sure!" said Nellie. "The saints be praised!"

"We broiled bacon and boiled eggs and baked (?) biscuits, and tried to fry potatoes. We made the coffee and tea without the paper."

"The bacon was limp and didn't brown; the eggs were all right, for we had boiled water in a kettle we brought out of the garret; the potatoes were soggy; and as for the biscuits! The papers stuck to them closer than ten brothers. We didn't attempt toast. But since my John can't enjoy a breakfast without it, we brought down a toaster and didn't tell what we had done when he said: 'Thank heaven here's one thing that tastes like old times!'"

"I never say die," said I to Nellie when I went to order luncheon and dinner."

Nellie Gives Her "Notice."

"She was crying again, and to cheer her up a bit I told her about Gen. Grant, who

proposed to fight it out on that line if it took all summer." She didn't see it in that light, and the upshot of the matter was that she told me next day of her intention to leave the first of next week, when her month was up. And so she did—sorrowfully, but there was no keeping her 'as long as them nasty paper bags was in the house.'"

"It is against my principles to be dis-

I was doing. You know how obstinate the ignorant are!"

"When my bags were gone I had the despoiled pots, kettles, and pans brought down again—all, that is, that I had not snatched down already when I was particularly hard pressed—and engaged a cook who could prepare food in the old way."

"What I am telling this story for is to ask you what was amiss in my manage-

ment. 60 years old learning to get along without a cook. The heat of the kitchen affects my head, but I can't bear to be beaten by a brown paper bag!"

Max J. A. T.

New Jersey Housewife's Experience.

"I am a housewife, and I attended last winter, together with my mother-in-law, lectures upon paper bag cookery. Both of us were interested and

to be a genuine helpmate for the best husband in the world. I think it my duty to keep living expenses down in every possible way consistent with health and comfort. So I bought two dozen bags, and, as I am trying to do my own work in our pretty cottage, I thought I would get rid of dish washing and all that, and preserve the flavor of the food and so on, by cooking after the new method."

"I began with a few simple things that I had seen the demonstrators do, and was so far successful that I was sure I could do well in the new line."

"The first dinner was in the form of what is a serious consideration to me at present. If one uses three or four bags at a meal, a dozen are gone in a day. That would make pretty expensive cooking for persons living on a salary, and these are the housekeepers who will be most likely to use them."

High Cost of "Utensils."

"The bags are sold in the department stores for 2 cents apiece—that is, 24 cents for a package of twelve, assorted sizes. You may readily see that they would be a serious drain upon the aforesaid salary."

"In ten days one would expend \$2.40 for cooking utensils! That would be a heavy outlay for them, were they pots and pans, that would last some months and be used again and again. But the bags are used once, then thrown away or burned. Allowing thirty days to the month, you will pay out for cooking vessels (that are good for nothing after one cooking) over \$7! What would be thought of a housekeeper who paid out that sum regularly to keep her kitchen stocked? Do you comprehend that it would run up to more than \$80 a year?"

"I confess that I was stunned at the computation. In talking it over with my better half we concluded that the money would better be put into an accident insurance."

"Until the paper bags can be turned out in the style of, say, talking machines, needles, a hundred for a few cents, I don't see how they can be used by those who practice intelligent economy. S. M. C."

How to Meet Objections Perplexing.

In reviewing the substance of these representative letters from practical housewives—all women of more than average intelligence and each capable of expressing her meaning forcibly—I am staggered how to meet all the objections against the general use of the popular "fad" which, we were ready to believe, would revolutionize culinary methods as now practiced in our kitchens."

In replying to the first letter, I have a word to say in defense of the paper bag as rightly handled. It should not turn black nor should it have a strong taste of burnt paper. If the heat of the oven be graded carefully by a thermometer and the bags be properly greased they should retain their color and not scorch. Of the greasing I have something to say presently. The point upon which I would dwell now is that "Nellie C." has apparently put the bag into an overheated oven. If the temperature exceeds a certain degree advised by the recipe the paper will scorch, and scorched paper imparts a disagreeable taste to everything it touches."

"Mrs. J. A. T." has a longer list of grievances. I may interject that she has a grievance.

of recounting them that make her story amusing reading. She may congratulate herself upon possessing a sense of humor that should tide her safely over more formidable domestic ills than those we are now considering."

Butter Applies with Brush.

I would set you right as to the quantity of butter needed to keep the lamb from burning. It is true that the papers should be well greased on the inside before anything goes into them. This is done with melted butter, and the butter for lamb or dripping is applied with a brush to all parts of the inner side of the bag. After the cooking begins, the flow of natural juices from the meat keeps the surface moist and secure against the risk of burning."

Chops and cutlets and chicken, which one would brown, should be breaded thickly all over before going into the bag. They will brown beautifully if this is done."

The biscuits would not have stuck to the paper had this been properly washed on the inside with melted butter as I have described. Not one fraction of an inch should escape the brush."

Potatoes may be boiled and likewise fried in the bags. I doubt if a fry could do the latter feat. The temperature of the range must be watched and regulated most judiciously if they would turn out crisp, golden-brown potatoes. It is conceded by experts in the art that beef cannot be roasted properly in the paper bag, whereas mutton, veal, lamb, and chicken may be cooked to a turn thus. Beef is said to be too watery for the process. Even when breaded, it is not what we would have it."

Of the dumplings I may say, as with the biscuits, the fault is first with insufficient and uneven buttering, secondly, with the uneven heat."

I have sat down to more than one paper bag meal conducted by experts. In each case the coffee was an ignominious failure. Don't attempt it!"

"Nellie" Hard to Convince.

Our Connecticut correspondent, with Yankee shrewdness, appreciates the almost impossibility of inducing the "cook of commerce" to spare herself the drudgery of dish, pot, and pan washing by the use of the French device so triumphantly exhibited in its finest demonstration by the master of culinary art at his recent visit to our shores. Sever may preach and our housekeeper may practice in the sight of "Nellie," and her companion without shaking her detestation of "them nasty paper bags!"

Which brings us to the novel and striking aspect of the situation set forth by the Jersey "gudewife." Her figures are startling in the summing up."

I commend her simple story to the thoughtful housekeeper. Eighty dollars per annum for kitchen utensils that cannot be carried over to the morrow may well make one hesitate to adopt the new fashion. So far as my knowledge of the history of paper bag cookery goes, this is the first time the non-economical side of the invention has been brought forward. Of course, as our New Jersey busy bee points out, the one way of "downing" the objection is by manufacturing bags that shall be as good in quality at one-tenth of the present cost."



Nellie's Eyes Were Red with Mortification. "Better Luck Next Time," said I. "Never Give Up After One Trial. But There Was No Keeping Nellie As Long As Those Nasty Paper Bags Was in the House!"

ment in the use of the new fad. I have obeyed rules all the way through, and made a wretched botch of the whole concern."

"I wish I could hear from other housekeepers who have given the paper bag a fair trial. Maybe I was too soon discouraged. I am called a good-housekeeper, but I don't relish at any time of life (I am

delighted with the demonstrations. Everything cooked in the bags was nicely done and the flavor was delicious. Fish, roast, and vegetables all were done to a turn without a failure. So it may be done if one will take the trouble to learn the art."

"We live in a New Jersey town where it is not easy to get good cooks or maids of any kind. Moreover, as a wife who wants

which the meat was cooked and stir in the browned flour and butter. (You would call it a roux.) Bring all to a boil in a saucepan and take up the rabbits carefully, breaking as little as possible. Arrange in a dish and when the gravy has boiled up in the saucepan, pour it over them. Serve with potato dumplings or with mashed potato."

"This is really fine! I prefer wild rabbits when I can get them, but we raise our own rabbits and therefore use them. Few cooks get the hansenpepper sour enough. It is not good or the 'real thing' unless it is sour."

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MARION HARLAND'S HELPING HAND

A trustworthy recipe that offers substitutes for meat, just now are particularly acceptable to the thrifty householder. It is not only that we are more healthy for eating less flesh food in hot weather, but the indigent rise in the price of meat from one end to the other of a land of peace and plenty has aroused the righteous indignation of all classes. While by no means sure that the right way to meet the wrong is to boycott the vendors of the dressed meats, who are not the chief offenders, I maintain that the judicious manager of the home is wise in cutting down the allowance of heavy foods until these calamities be passed."

Said a rich matron to me last week: "It is not that we cannot afford to pay a third more for our meats and poultry than we did a year ago. Personally I should not feel it. But I have other and better uses for money than upholding extortioners who are grinding the faces of the poor. I will be partaker of no man's aims. So we are on the qui vive for whatever will take the place of meat in our family fare. Fortunately the summer is rich in fruits, vegetables, and eggs, and we can get fresh fish at reasonable prices. So my butcher pockets less than half as much of my money as he had six months ago."

"No, I have not joined a housekeepers' league. Nor do I excuse the women who drunched butchers' stands with kerosene some weeks back. Two wrongs never made a right, and they never will. If those women had spent the amount of energy in studying how to do without meat and yet nourish their families that they expended in kerosene throwing and fighting polemonies, their end would have been gained sooner and more surely."

Plain talk, this, and altogether apropos, to the practical menus this clever woman put on her own table. She is, by the way, a resident of New York state and conversant with the state of New York markets. Her scalloped salmon is a capital "dinner," even for hollow-down-to-the-bone boys. Her potato salad might well be the main dish of a family supper, supported by crackers and cheese, quick biscuits, and a plain cake made fine by her strawberry icing.

Mother Would Make Sacrifice.

"This mother who has not the means or the strength to assist her boys to secure a bright future, yet desires with all her soul to enable them to play the part of men in the world, puts aside the selfish thought of

unwillingness to resign their companionship and is resigned to what will be for their best good."

Recipe for Hansenpepper.

"Of late I have read a number of recipes—all different—in your Helping Hand for hansenpepper. I feel constrained to send mine by the belief that although it may be a little more troublesome than some of the others, it will pay for itself in the result."

"I am sending a pretty fair cook by my friends, and I could send you tried and approved recipes by the dozen if I had time to write them out."

"HASENPEPPER—Cut two rabbits into about eight pieces each. Wash and drain and wipe dry. Then pack into an earthen jar or a deep granite ware dish. Put in with them two onions sliced thin, six whole cloves, two bay leaves, ten whole allspice, a teaspoonful of pepper corns, and cover all with vinegar."

"Fit on a tightly fitting cover and set for three days in a cool place. Turn them into a saucepan; add a quart of water and cook slowly until the rabbits are tender, but have not dropped from the bone. Heat a heaping tablespoonful of butter in a frying pan until it begins to brown with a large spoonful of flour. Strain off the liquor in

which the meat was cooked and stir in the browned flour and butter. (You would call it a roux.) Bring all to a boil in a saucepan and take up the rabbits carefully, breaking as little as possible. Arrange in a dish and when the gravy has boiled up in the saucepan, pour it over them. Serve with potato dumplings or with mashed potato."

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FAMILY MENUS FOR A WEEK.

SUNDAY.
BREAKFAST.
Omelette.
Cereal and cream.
Fruit salad.
Breakfast rolls.
Toast.
Tea and coffee.
LUNCHEON.
Cold roast beef.
Whole fried potatoes.
Balls from breakfast.
Apricots & la vinaigrette.
Heated crackers and cheese.
Cake and jam.
Ginger ale and grape juice punch.

DINNER.
Julienne soup.
Roast lamb with mint sauce.
(See recipe for same in Helping Hand.)
Green peas and young carrots.
String beans with cream.
Home made ice cream.
Black coffee.

MONDAY.
BREAKFAST.
Berries.
Cereal and cream.
LUNCHEON.
Whole wheat bread.
Toast.
Coffee and tea.

TUESDAY.
BREAKFAST.
Grapes or oranges.
Cereal and cream.
Baked eggs. (See recipe.)
Graham biscuits.
Toast.
Tea and coffee.
LUNCHEON.
Mince of lamb with carrots.
Baked potatoes.
Souffle of squash (a left over).
Ginger snaps and cream cheese.

WEDNESDAY.
BREAKFAST.
Cream of tomato soup.
Cold liver & Potatoes.
Green peas.
Corn fritters.
Friedling Island.
Black coffee.

THURSDAY.
BREAKFAST.
Berries.
Cereal and cream.
Bacon and fried apples.
Toast.
Cold bread.
Coffee and tea.
LUNCHEON.
Tomatoes stuffed with forcemeat and baked.
(Forcemeat based upon remains of liver and gravy.)
Potato biscuits (a left over).
Remains of potato salad from yesterday.
Heated crackers and cheese.
Crunch pudding.

FRIDAY.
BREAKFAST.
Berries.
Cereal and cream.
Baked perch or other pan fish.
Crackers, heated.
Plain cake with strawberry icing.
(See recipe.)

SATURDAY.
BREAKFAST.
Omelette.
Cereal and cream.
Bacon.
Baked eggs.
Shortcake (plain).
Toast.
Tea and coffee.
LUNCHEON.
Salmon scallop, sliced and fried (a left over).
Potato croquette (a left over).
Shortcake from breakfast.
Crackers and cheese.
Macaroni and beef & la Roma.

DINNER.
Combination soup. (Based upon 10 cent can of beef soup, with the addition of remains accumulated within three days).
Beef steak and kidney pie.
(a left over, mushrooms added, etc.).
Cauliflower.
Young turnips.
Lemon jelly and sponge cake.
Jack coffee.

Homemade Fireless Cooker.

This item is from one of our staff of practical chemists, whose contributions are always welcome being practical and practicable to the average houseworker."

"It is not every woman who can afford to buy such a fireless cooker as was lauded to the skies a few weeks ago by a member. It deserves all she said of it. Every woman may make a hay or cotton or newspaper stove that will do the work of the day in a homely, yet efficient way. My first experiment with the fireless cooker was in the country, where the only available materials for the construction of the wondrous labor and fuel saver were a stout wooden box and plenty of soft hay. I called in the gardener to my help, and deposited in the box we prepared a covered saucisson full of oatmeal porridge that had come from the bottom upon the stove. The cook stood by, respectful and incredulous; the gardener was audible in his doubts."

"Ten hours thereafter the saucisson was exhausted and yielded up porridge smoking hot and deliciously tender. The second evening was with certain hard unripe pears shaken from the tree by violent winds before their time. We pureed them without cutting; cooked them ten minutes after the bowl was reached (which left them as hard as before) and buried the covered saucisson in the hay. They emerged after six hours' seclusion so soft that a straw pierced the cores."

"A really good fireless cooker is the most valuable bit of furniture one can have in a summer kitchen. If you cannot get one, exercise ingenuity: the manufacture of a home made substitute."